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To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is written in reference to Alyssa Temkin, a six year old with whom I have been working in therapy since February, 2010. Alyssa's mom originally contacted me in order to assist her daughter with the emotional management of the issues related to her medical condition, Glycogen Storage Disease, Type 1A. Due to this medical condition, Alyssa has endured numerous hospital visits and procedures, multiple situations that have required immediate attention, and extensive supervision and oversight by those responsible for her. As a result, Alyssa has understandably suffered issues associated with Separation Anxiety Disorder, Generalized Anxiety, and Panic Disorder. To complicate matters, stress and anxiety can have a highly negative impact on her medical condition. As her medical condition has caused her to have less control of her life and body, her fears and behavioral resistances have increased. As a result of these issues, I began to assist her and her family to better understand and manage this anxiety.

Over the course of the last year and a half, Alyssa and her family worked very hard to understand how to best cope with her fears and anxieties. Since this work began, Alyssa has had to go through multiple medical procedures and she has displayed a greater ability to utilize the coping strategies and support provided to her. She is an incredibly bright and engaging young girl who has displayed a great ability to endure stress and intervention.

In September, 2010 Alyssa moved to her current school, and because of the current laws, she was forced to adjust to the demand for a parent/legal guardian, or a nurse to provide all of her feedings. Prior to this, we had worked for months assisting Alyssa to be able to separate from her parents more appropriately. She was able to work hard at this and grew tremendously as a result. The requirement as stated in the current legislation forced her mother to engage and separate from Alyssa every hour and half during the school day. The alternative was for her to be fed by a nurse who she never met. Due to Alyssa's anxiety, it was nearly impossible for her to adjust to the new school and begin to accept feedings from a virtual stranger. Almost immediately, her separation and panic like symptoms intensified. This in turn began impacting her medical condition due to the higher levels of stress. As this continued for several weeks, Alyssa's mom was unable to sooth her and she had regressed to the emotional place she had been the previous year.

Despite having the appropriate and knowledgeable caregivers prepared to provide the feedings, the dated legislation did not allow for them to be involved. These well informed individuals were equipped and trusted by the family, and most importantly Alyssa herself. They would have most certainly assisted in making for a smoother transition and a significant reduction in the anxiety that she experienced.

It is my hope that the newly proposed legislation (Bill 369) will be accepted and serve to replace the dated and inappropriate guidelines for children similar to Alyssa. While Alyssa has returned to a more stable place with regard to her anxiety, many other children similar to Alyssa will walk in her shoes and should not have to experience such restrictive intervention that does not account for the individual's specific needs.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my concerns and I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this process.

Sincerely,

Daniel Weiner, MA LPC